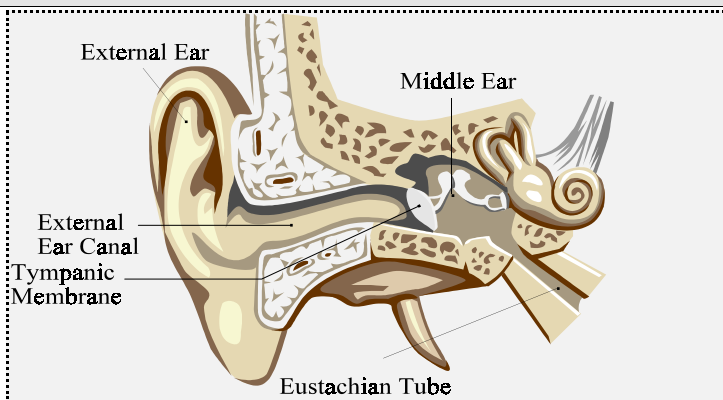


Community Health Plan



What is Otitis Media?

- ' **Oto** means "ear," **-itis** means "inflammation," and **media** means "middle." So, **otitis media** means "inflammation of the middle ear."
- ' The inflammation occurs as a result of a middle ear infection.
- ' It can occur in one or both ears.
- ' It is the most common cause of hearing loss in children.
- ' Although **otitis media** is most common in young children, it also affects adults occasionally.
- ' It occurs most commonly in Winter and Spring.

How to Prevent Otitis Media

- ' Avoid contact with people with a cold or wash your child's hands after contact with someone with a cold. Colds are a common cause of ear infections.
- ' Breast-feed your baby. Breast-fed babies have fewer ear infections.
- ' Hold your baby in an upright position during bottle-feeding and do not allow him/her to fall asleep with a bottle.
- ' Remove irritants and things that may cause allergy from your home, including dust, hazardous chemicals and tobacco smoke.

It is important that you learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of **otitis media**. If **otitis media** is not medically treated, it can cause hearing loss. This hearing loss can affect the child's ability to learn and delay his/her speech development. Therefore, if you suspect your child has **otitis media**, make sure you take him/her to the doctor to be treated promptly.

Signs and Symptoms of Otitis Media

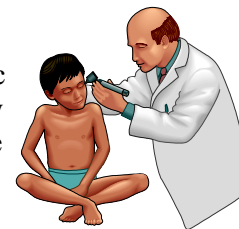
- ' Earache (sometimes with a feeling of pressure and blockage in the ear)
- ' Muffled hearing
- ' Stuffy nose
- ' Tugging or rubbing the ear
- ' Fever
- ' Irritability
- ' Discharge from nose or ear



If your child shows symptoms of **otitis media**, call **1-800-832-6334** before taking him/her to the emergency room. A doctor or nurse will give you advice on how to take care of your child's medical problem.

How is Otitis Media Treated?

- ' The doctor may prescribe an antibiotic to fight the infection. The doctor may also recommend medication to relieve pain and reduce fever.
- ' If an antibiotic is recommended, make sure you follow the instructions on the prescription carefully.
- ' Call the doctor if you have questions about any of your child's medications or if the symptoms do not clear up.
- ' In some cases, the doctor may recommend surgery to allow fluid to drain from the ear and to relieve pain.
- ' Keep all follow-up appointments with the doctor to insure your child's complete recovery.



This newsletter should not be considered specific medical advice, as each circumstance is different. If you need medical advice, talk to your doctor and do not rely on knowledge gained from this information. Community Health Plan/Health Education and Promotion Unit, 07/98.

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